

Jean Taylor on the Bauer-Neill House at the Fruit and Spice Park
Telephone Interview by Maria T. Temkin - September 19, 1983

- Original location of house was across from the Orchid Jungle, in the vicinity of S.W. 267th Street and S.W. 159th Avenue (address of Claude L. Watts). This area was once known as Modello.

- It is the oldest house known south of Perrine. In South Miami two other old homes are the Richard/Erwin and the Maude Black. The Bauer-Neill has been much less altered than these.

- 1900 - Walter Raleigh (could trace lineage to Sir Walter Raleigh) Bauer, son of Francis Edwin and Hannah Bauer enlisted in the Navy and was sent to Cuba. Visited Homestead area and told parents about it. He homesteaded in Perrine, but did not prove up homestead since he was forced to leave the area due to a potential murder charge of which he was innocent.

- 1902 - Mr. and Mrs. Bauer (were in their 70s) took Walter's advice and came to homestead on a relinquishment from a surveyor. They hired another homesteader who was a carpenter - Mr. Moss - to build them their home. He first built the kitchen and later added the story and one half home.

- 1905 - Mr. Bauer died of a stroke, he was buried on their claim, years later the grave was dug up and remains were reburied in family plot at Naranja cemetery. Since it took 7 yrs. to prove up a homestead, the property was transferred into Hannah (she was a teacher in New York state) Bauer's name. The Bauers also had two daughters who proved up homesteads alongside theirs.

One daughter, Martha Arabella Burdenn, who lived in Pennsylvania came to homestead next to Bauers after her divorce. She first worked as a cook at the Richmond Inn. Later, she was trained as a nurse by Dr. Jackson and became head nurse of the Overseas Hospital (owned by the railroad) which was once located on Biscayne Blvd., near where the Sears building now stands. She helped with many of the casualties of the 1906 hurricane. She had five children. One daughter worked with her at the hospital and married an orderly (Burdenn) who turned out to be an Navy deserter. Remarried a Homestead pioneer - Horton.

Another daughter, Lillian, married a farmer and lived on a farm.
- July, 1919 - Property was sold to L.R. and I.T. Nixon - they bought it as an investment and allowed Hannah Bauer to continue living in the house.

^{died in 1922}
- December, 1919 - Property was sold for \$2,500 - 20 acres and the house - to the Neill family. The Neills were farmers and lived in the house with their 8 children. They made some minor changes to the house:

- put wallboards over inside walls
- added a partition to make a room
- turned the once straight stairway at a right angle with landing
- enclosed part of the porch for a bathroom
- 1 X 12 boards of porch that were rotted was replaced by a cement porch, when the house was moved to the park, the old wooden porch was rebuilt

The house has never been painted, wood was just left to weather. The ceiling of the house is of tongue and groove construction. The original home did not have a porch. This was added by the Bauers because Mrs. Bauer was on crutches and it became difficult for her to walk on the coral rock. On porch she could plant flowers.

- 1980 - Markham Neill, one of the 8 Neill children dies, and the property is sold by the heirs to Robert and Francis Mitchell. They decide to put in a grove where the house stands, but recognizing its historic value arrange to donate the house to the Parks Dept. of Metro-Dade County.

- Fall, 1982 - House is moved to the Fruit and Spice Park.

